

We All Need to Stand Up and Fight against Further Student Fee Increases



By Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi

[California Majority Report](#): During the University of California Board of Regents meeting today in Riverside, I explained to the Board why I think it's time all of us -- students, community leaders, bloggers, and education advocates -- reject further student fee increases. Simply put, I don't think it's appropriate to consistently shift the tax burden, year after year, to one of the segments of our society that are least capable of affording the costs.

Adjusted for inflation, student fees have more than doubled at the UC and CSU systems and more than tripled at the community colleges since 1990. When the state dissuades students from pursuing a higher education, we only rob ourselves of potential tax revenues in later years and increase the number of today's youths who will be tomorrow's prisoners or recipients of aid. To address our budget woes, we need to turn away from the easy fix of taxing students and begin the process to repeal the two-thirds legislative majority requirement to pass budgets and adjust taxes.

A transcript of my remarks to the board is below, and you can also listen to audio [here](#) :

"The proposed budget that was signed basically requires that this group of regents approve a 9.3 percent increase in the fees, which amounts to something slightly less than \$700. It's interesting to note that the legislature decided to not increase other fees by some amount or another but instead decided to impose upon the students what could arguably - and I'll make that argument - be called a tax of \$700 additional tax on every student in the University of California system, and about half that amount in an additional tax increase for every student in the CSU system. That is a particularly stupid tax policy when there are further options available. I'll just point out that the one percent increase in the sales tax of somebody who chooses to buy a \$50,000 Mercedes would amount to some \$500 increase in their tax burden. There are options out there, and what I would hope that this body would consider is to stand up and fight. And to push back. To push back really hard, because you are powerful, and the university is powerful. It has a voice, and it really ought to use its voice to stand up and fight and say, "Enough." Enough already. Enough of stupid taxes on students. Enough of the starvation of the education system. We are starving this system, and in doing so, we are destroying the economic potential for the future. And I think we really have to stand up and fight. You got to push back. We just can't say, "Well, there's nothing we can do. We're just going to have to accept it." I'm all for a fight, and that's a fight about the future, at least in my opinion."